



SDEP

Skills Development for Increased Employability Programme

Project Summary

The four-year Skills Development for Increased Employability Programme (SDEP), launched in 2023, seeks to improve employability of the labour force for both women and men in Zambia. Through a EUR6.5 million funding partnership agreement with the European Union (EU), the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Zambia is working through a partnership approach to support the government, and public, and private actors to improve the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) system. The project will be implemented from 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2027.

Project Background

Challenge of Youth unemployment

Youth unemployment in 2020 was recorded at 19.9 percent, where 17.6 percent was for male youths and 22.7 percent was for female youths. Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force was 37.3 percent, where 44.1 percent was for females and 31.8 percent for males. Working-age population (15 years or older) was estimated at 9,905,071 in 2020, in which the size of labour force was 3,465,526.

Furthermore, Zambia remains one of Africa's youngest countries by median age. According to the UN's mid-range global population projections, at least 375,000 young people on average will enter the workforce each year to 2030. Between 2030 and 2050 this average number doubles to 747,000 jobs per year, just to keep the present-day rates of labour force participation and employment fixed. Despite the increased number of youths entering the workforce, the private sector continues to face challenges recruiting workers with the required skills.

Challenges in the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) System

The Vision 2030 recognizes TEVET as an integral part of the Education and Skills Development subsector and its contribution to economic development. There are, however, several constraints that Zambia faces in attaining this objective, some of which include low access to skills training, poor quality of skills training and skills mismatch caused by the peripheral role played by industry in the development and implementation of TEVET curricula. In addition, the skills development ecosystem in Zambia and in particular the TEVET system faces capacity constraints regarding the provision of quality and relevant skills for the labour market. Another challenge is insufficient or outdated equipment and teaching aids coupled with limited access to industry exposure during training. In addition, low morale, unprofessionalism of teachers, low teacher training capacity and negative attitudes of staff and students have also contributed to poor learning outcomes in TEVET institutions.

Project focus sectors

The SDEP will focus on skills development in four target sectors. These sectors have been targeted based on their alignment with government development priorities, their contribution to the country's economic development, and their potential for current and future employment creation. These sectors include:

- A. Agriculture sector
- B. Mining sector
- C. Tourism sector and
- D. Mining sector

A. Agriculture sector focus: there is a plan to draw more attention to skills development with a focus on value addition and processing of agricultural products, along with construction to increase infrastructure to support



processing. With the new dawn government attention to climate change and environment protection, skills related to nature-based solutions, bioeconomy, sustainable production models and practises, circular economy, become also very important to facilitate job creation and access to green finance.

B. Mining sector focus: As the countries mining sector continues to evolve due to several pressures including technological advances, climate change impacts and related concerns, power supply deficits, macro-economic factors including demand fluctuations and others so should the requisite skills change. The sector requires critical upskilling and reskilling efforts to address diversification from copper to other minerals, the use of alternative energy for production, increased efficiency during production, the development of circular economy models around the sector, and the respect of use and management of natural resources.

C. Tourism sector focus: The Vision 2030 identifies that the sector's potential has not been fully exploited due to inadequate marketing of Zambia as a tourism destination, poor infrastructure, foreign tourist's concerns about safety and hygiene standards and un-competitiveness of tourism services. The Tourism Master Plan, 2018 – 2038, intends to address the gap in high quality service-oriented sector arising from the need to raise the



standard of training in tourism related skills that should also include entrepreneurship, use of green technologies and enhance the benefits of natural resource management and their conservation to local communities and wildlife. The SDEP project will play a critical role in this regard.

D. Renewable energy sector focus: As seen in the three sectors above, provision of energy plays a vital role in sustaining the growth of the economy. The Government of Zambia has committed to deliver affordable and clean energy through the implementation of a Renewable Energy Investment Plan that will improve the energy mix and reduce vulnerability to climate shocks. This will require the review of skills development policies, programmes and curricula to support this ambition and to ensure new

opportunities for job creation are created in the transition. The evolution in the energy mix both in supply and use and the need to reduce carbon emissions require the development of specific skills related to energy saving, use of alternative sources of energy (such as solar and wind, but not only these sources of power). Modern technologies developed to support growth of this sector and still several of these skills are not locally available.



Project Approach and Strategies

SDEP will improve the TEVET system through a multi-pronged approach:

- » ***TEVET system strengthening:*** Strengthening governance and management structures of Zambia's TEVET system.
- » ***Labour Market Information System (LMIS):*** Strengthening of the Labour Market Information System and skills anticipation capacities, with a focus on priority economic sectors and with a view of expanding to other sectors while reinforcing the capacities for a skills anticipation system at national level.
- » ***Curriculum Development:*** Upgrading and maintenance of training facilities and curriculum development in TEVET institutions and.
- » ***Private Sector Engagement:*** Active engagement of the private sector to facilitate the robust updating of the curricula and the rollout of Work Based Learning (WBL) activities.
- » ***Partnerships:*** In addition to private sector engagements, the project works with public institutions, relevant government ministries, and other development actors, and programmes. The project is at all levels, establishing a strong linkage with the EU Green Deal and the EU-Africa strategy that emphasises on increasing access to quality education, skills, research and enhance social rights.
- » ***STED Methodology:*** The intervention is using the ILO's Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) methodology in the four-targeted sectors led by the newly established Skills Advisory Committee (SAC) and Sectoral Advisory Groups (SAG). The project will start with two economic sectors, to be prioritised under the inception phase, and expand into the remaining two sectors within the foreseen implementation period of the project life span.

Expected Project Results

- » **RELEVANCE AND CAPACITY OF THE TEVET SYSTEM TO CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION IS ENHANCED.**
- » **PRIVATE SECTOR ACCESS TO RELEVANT SKILLS IN SELECTED STRATEGIC/PRIORITY SECTORS (MINING, RENEWABLE ENERGY, TOURISM AND AGRICULTURE) IS IMPROVED.**
- » **CURRICULA REVIEWED, UPDATED AND PILOTTED TO RESPOND TO LABOUR MARKET DEMANDS.**



Key Project Stakeholders

- **Key Implementing Partner:** Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA), The International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO)
- **Government:** Includes key government ministries of Ministry of Technology and Science (MOTS), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), Ministry of Green Economy and Environment (MGEE), Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development (MMMD, Ministry of Agriculture (MA), Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Ministry of Energy (MOE), Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI), Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED)
- **Public Institutions:** Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA), Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA), Zambia Statistics Agency (ZSA), Public TEVETA training institutions.
- **Private Sector:** Private TEVETA training institutions, European Union Business Forum, Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI), Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE), Chamber of Mines, and Tourism, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM), Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU), Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI), Association of Zambian Women in Mining (AZWIM), Association of Women Miners and Gemstone Traders of Zambia, Zambia Renewable Energy Agency (ZARENA), Solar Industry Association of Zambia (SIAZ).
- **Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination.** In addition to institutional stakeholders, the programme anticipates collaboration with other existing complementary programmes.

Contact Details

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